

Chulanur Parameswar Ramakrishnan - 70089 / EE

by Arvind Gupta / Raghavendra Mathur / Ravi Venkatesh

Arvind wrote:

Although CP was our batch mate I did not know him well during IIT. One reason was my dread for academic high achievers. CP was one of them. CP had CPI in him and passed out with close to 10 points. But because both of us were from Electrical Engineering we met quite often. I really came close to him when we both joined TELCO as GTs along with Mukund, Madhav and others in 1975. I always wondered why CP would join TELCO – for he was a quintessential researcher. Lucky for me we landed in the same lodge as roommates in the Deccan Gymkhana area of Pune and stayed together for 4 years. That's when I got to know him well – and discovered a deeply shy and sensitive human being.

CP came from Jamshedpur (like Angshu, Raghavendra, Gopal, Venkatesh). His father worked in TISCO. One reason why CP with a very high CPI did not go abroad in 1975 like many, were his economic constraints. His father was in a small job in TISCO and he could not afford to apply to many Universities. His elder sister was married to some executive in Godrej Typewriters. The husband turned out to be a drunkard and the sister with a child came to stay with CP's parents. CP had to support them.

After two years of staying in a lodge we both hired out a small one-room tenement in a dalit basti called Vadarwadi in Pune. The society was called *Paanch Pandav Society*. Both of us didn't know cooking so we slowly learnt to cook – because CP became tired out of eating in hotels. We both used to go bird watching in the Pune University on Thursday and there we met Prof G. K. Shukla who finished his PhD from Edinburgh University and was a pool officer in Pune University. Prof. Shukla gave us his copy of *Small is Beautiful* by E. F. Schumacher to read. We both lapped it up and it had a major impact on us. Later Prof G. K. Shukla joined IIT Kanpur and worked until his retirement in the Dept. of Mathematics.

After a few years CP got tired of TELCO in a routine factory job. He got admission abroad – but the American Embassy wanted to know his bank balance. I had saved Rs 10,000/- out of the small stipend we got and gave it to CP. In 1981 I had the privilege of staying with CP for a week in his native home in Brahman Gali, Palghat, Kerala. The house was a typical Brahmin house. I still have his home address penned in my diary. Four adjoining houses had their kitchens facing each other – with a well in-between. CP's mother drew fresh water from the well through the pulley on the kitchen window. The simplicity of the house flummoxed me – there were no beds – everyone slept on a mat.

Later CP sent me his marriage card. He was not much of a writer – but somewhere I have preserved a few of his letters. CP did brilliantly in the USA – he had a startup which he encashed for several million dollars before the IT meltdown. He was not greedy and never much interested in money. He wrote to me, "I am now leading a retired life, spending a lot of time with my two sons and pursuing philosophy."

Once several years later CP visited his in-laws in Mumbai. Then I went from Pune to Mumbai and spent the whole day with my dear friend. The sons were 6 and 8 years at that time. That's the last I met CP. His premature demise shocked me and hurt me deeply.

Friends like Angshu, Raghavendra, Gopal and Ravi Venkatesh from Jamshedpur could kindly add to this story.

Could some kindred soul send me his son's email so that I write my feeling of deep loss to the family?

Raghavendra wrote:

My good old friend in Hall 3 and Hall 5. We (the Jampot Gang) all moved together most of the time. I don't know how many times we sat with CP after the lectures and he tutored us and explained the 'fundas'. His fundas of Bijli were crystal clear and we all depended on him even if the lectures went 'over our heads'. We knew CP was there to take care. I don't know about the others, but I would not have been able to pass several of those electives if CP was not with us right from 1st year till we left IITK! I owe it to dear CP.

Yes, one more thing. He loved oiling his hair on Sunday mornings before going for alu parathas! And this was regular.

CP was a rather serious and quiet type and would hardly joke but was always with us 'fatruing around' whether to the movies in L7 or to Kanpur city.

We all miss him.

Ravi wrote:

I am devastated.

Chulanur Parameswaran Ramakrishnan, or CP as he was known was from Jamshedpur. My father and his father were good friends and worked in the same department in TISCO and the families knew each other. He came from humble surroundings.

His days in school were uneventful; but it was at IITK that he really hit his stride on the academic front. We used to joke that whatever he ate went straight into his brain...

After IITK, he did a stint at Telco Pune (I think) because in all probability he was saving up some money to go to the USA and his family may not have been able to afford it...

I lost touch with him after IITK and once my parents and his family left Jamshedpur after retirement there was no contact.

He was a non smoker, non drinker, pure vegetarian...none of the usual bad habits.

What happened ?
